



The mayors of five big cities seek a meeting with Biden about how to better manage arriving migrants

By COLLEEN LONG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The mayors of Chicago, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles and New York are pressing to meet with President Joe Biden about getting federal help in managing the surge of migrants they say are arriving in their cities with little to no coordination, support or resources from his administration.

The Democratic leaders say in a letter obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday that while they appreciate Biden's efforts so far, much more needs to be done to ease the burden on their cities. Migrants are sleeping in police station foyers in Chicago. In New York, a cruise ship terminal was turned into a shelter. In Denver, the number of migrants arriving has increased tenfold and available space to shelter them has withered.



Immigrants from Venezuela are reflected in a marble wall while taking shelter at the Chicago Police Department's 16th District station on May 1, 2023.

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The mayors of five big cities seek a meeting with Biden about how to better manage arriving migrants

Continued from Front

With fewer available work authorizations, these migrants cannot find work that would allow them to get into proper housing. Denver Mayor Mike Johnston, who is leading the coalition, said nearly every conversation he has had with arriving migrants is the same: Can he help them find a job, they ask.

"The crisis is we have folks here who desperately want to work. And we have employers here who desperately want to hire them. And we have a federal government that's standing in the way of employers who want to hire employees who want to work," Johnston said.

Also signing on were the mayors of the country's four largest cities: Eric Adams of New York, Karen Bass of Los Angeles, Brandon Johnson of Chicago and Sylvester Turner of Houston.

The situation at the U.S.-Mexico border has vexed the Democratic president, who is seeking reelection in 2024. He is increasingly under fire from members of his own party who are managing the growing number of migrants in their cities. Republicans claim Biden is soft on border security and is allowing too many people to enter the United States.

He has responded by



Migrants rest at a makeshift shelter in Denver, Jan. 6, 2023. Associated Press

toughening rules at the border meant to curb illegal crossings and by offering work authorizations and other incentives to those who come to the U.S. legally — applying ahead of time and arriving by plane. "We're committed to supporting local jurisdictions that are hosting migrants that have recently arrived into the country. We're going to continue to deliver support every way that we can," said Emilie Simons, deputy White House press secretary.

Simons said the administration is already working to reduce to 30 days the time it takes to get arriving migrants through the system. The White House said it has entered into a partnership with New York City on a work authorization clinic where up to 300 migrants per day can come in to

submit work permit applications.

The reason for the ballooning number of migrants in these cities is complicated, but economic and climate-related hardships in their home countries are key drivers. There are increasing numbers of families arriving and asking for asylum.

Some conservative-leaning states have sent migrants to so-called sanctuary cities such as New York or Chicago, where laws are more favorable to noncitizens. But that alone does not explain why the cities are facing such increases.

In years past, when migrants arrived, they would be released and picked up by nonprofit groups before usually going to stay with a relative already in the U.S. But the nationalities of the people arriving

have changed, and many no longer have any place to go.

Winning asylum is a long and difficult process through a badly clogged immigration court system. In some cases, migrants may wait up to a decade for a court date. They are released into the U.S. to wait. Some are eligible to work, but such authorizations are badly delayed. There are concerns, too, that allowing too much work authorization will encourage more people to make the dangerous journey to the U.S. on foot. So thousands are in limbo, unable to work, sleeping in shelters or government facilities.

Biden has requested \$1.4 billion from Congress to help state and local governments provide shelter and services for migrants, after earlier pleas from Democratic mayors and governors.

Johnston and the other mayors say in their letter that more is needed, and they are asking for \$5 billion.

"While we are greatly appreciative of the additional federal funding proposed, our city budgets and local taxpayers continue to bear the brunt of this ongoing federal crisis," the letter says. "Cities have historically absorbed and integrated new migrants with

success."

Denver is spending \$2 million a week on sheltering migrants. New York has surpassed a total of \$1.7 billion and Chicago has spent \$320 million, according to the letter.

"Our cities need additional resources that far exceed the amount proposed in order to properly care for the asylum seekers entering our communities," the mayors' letter says. "Relying on municipal budgets is not sustainable and has forced us to cut essential city services."

The mayors also want an accelerated work authorization approval process so migrants can find work.

"We are extremely appreciative of the work the Biden-Harris administration has done in expanding work authorization and providing funding for this mission, but we need to go one step further to ensure we continue to meet the moment and provide care for new arrivals," Johnston's office said in a statement.

The cities are full of people who have applied, but there are delays of six months or more. The mayors also are pushing to expand authorizations so anyone released into the U.S. would become eligible to find work while they wait for their immigration cases to play out. □



Secretary of State Antony Blinken testifies before a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing to examine the national security supplemental request, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023.

Associated Press

By **MATTHEW LEE**
AP Diplomatic Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Antony Blinken

will visit Israel and Jordan this week as Israel's war in Gaza and international criticism of it intensify, the State Depart-

Blinken heads to Israel, Jordan as Gaza war and criticism of it intensifies

ment said Wednesday. Blinken will depart Washington on Thursday and will be in Israel and Jordan on Friday and Further stops in the Middle East are possible, meaning the trip may follow the frenetic pace of Blinken's last trip to the region shortly after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel where last-minute schedule changes were frequent. Blinken ended up traveling to Israel three times as well as six Arab nations during that trip.

Blinken will be entering a diplomatic maelstrom that will likely complicate his mission. Jordan announced Wednesday that it had recalled its ambassador to Israel and would not permit Israel's ambassador to Jordan to return to the country. It said it would not revisit those moves until the Gaza conflict was over.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Blinken would once again underscore the Biden administration's support for Isra-

el's right to defend itself but also stress the importance of minimizing civilian casualties and ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches innocent Palestinians in Gaza. Securing the release of hundreds of Israelis and others held hostage by Hamas in Gaza, easing the transit of dual Palestinian nationals and foreigners currently in Gaza into Egypt and preventing a broader regional war from erupting will also be key agenda items, Miller said. □

The White House is working on a strategy to combat Islamophobia

By AAMER MADHANI,
SEUNG MIN KIM and ZEKE
MILLER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration is developing a national strategy to combat Islamophobia as the White House faces skepticism from many Muslim Americans for its staunch support of Israel's military assault on Hamas in Gaza.

The White House originally was expected to announce its plans to develop the strategy last week when Biden met with Muslim leaders, but that was delayed, according to three people familiar with the matter. Two said the delay was due partly to concerns from Muslim Americans that the administration lacked credibility on the issue given its robust backing of Israel's military, whose strikes against Hamas militants have killed thousands of civilians in Gaza. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the White House plans.

The launch of the anti-Islamophobia effort has been anticipated for months after the administration in May released a national strategy to combat antisemitism that made



President Joe Biden speaks during an event on protecting retirement security against what are commonly referred to as "junk fees" in the State Dining Room of the White House, Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023, in Washington.

passing reference to countering hatred against Muslims.

The new initiative is expected to take months to formalize, following a similar process to the plan to counter antisemitism that involved various government agencies. White House spokeswoman Emilie Simons said Wednesday that the inter-agency group's "next step is to release a strategy on Islamophobia." She did not offer details on a timeline

for the effort.

Incidences of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate have skyrocketed in the United States and abroad since the surprise Oct. 7 attack by Hamas against Israel that killed more than 1,400 people and saw hundreds taken hostage, and Israel's response in Gaza, where it has pledged to use force to "destroy" Hamas. One of the most prominent attacks in the U.S. was the killing of 6-year-old Wadea Al-Fay-

oume and the wounding of his mother in an attack in Illinois that prosecutors allege was driven by Islamophobia.

"This horrific act of hate has no place in America and stands against our fundamental values: freedom from fear for how we pray, what we believe, and who we are," Biden said afterward.

There had been widespread agreement among Muslim Americans on the

need for a national strategy to counter Islamophobia, according to a fourth person familiar with the matter, who added that the Israel-Hamas war has made the timing of the White House announcement more complicated. The person, who was also not authorized to speak publicly about the internal deliberations, said the administration wants to keep the two issues separate, while some prominent Muslim American groups see them as interrelated.

Administration officials, during the meeting with a small group of faith leaders last week, indicated things were "in the works" for an anti-Islamophobia strategy, said Rami Nashashibi, the founder of the Inner City Muslim Action Network in Chicago and a participant in that session.

Nashashibi said he believed such an effort would be "dead on arrival" with the Muslim community until the president and administration officials forcefully condemn members of the far-right government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who have openly called for the eradication of Palestinians from Gaza and until the administration more aggressively calls out hate crimes targeting Muslims and Arab Americans. □

Biden nominates a top adviser on Asia to be the State Department's No. 2 diplomat



The then U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Kurt Campbell speaks to the media in Tokyo, Jan. 17, 2013.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is nominating a top adviser on Asia to serve as the State Department's second-ranking diplomat, the White House said Wednesday, elevating one of the architects of the administration's efforts to develop a more Asia-focused foreign policy.

Kurt Campbell currently is deputy assistant to the president and coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs on the National Security Council. He has played an important role in helping Biden reinvigorate the diplomatic grouping of the United States, Japan, Australia and India, and has helped to ease historic tensions between South Korea and Japan and shape America's approach to China.

If confirmed, he would replace Wendy Sherman, who retired in July, as deputy secretary of state.

"Kurt is a tremendous asset," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in a statement. "His passion and commitment to our alliances and partnerships is unquestionably strengthening America's strategic position in the world and improving our ability to deal with shared challenges."

Campbell served in President Barack Obama's administration as the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He also previously was deputy assistant defense secretary for Asian and Pacific Affairs, White House fellow at the Treasury Department and director of the Democracy Office at the NSC during the Clinton administration. □

DEA agent leaked secret information about Maduro ally targeted by U.S., prosecutor says

By **JIM MUSTIAN** and **JOSH-
UA GOODMAN**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal narcotics agent leaked sensitive case information about one of Washington's top criminal targets in Venezuela as part of a scheme to sell government secrets to defense lawyers seeking to attract deep-pocketed clients, a jury was told this week.

In a wiretapped phone call, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Agent John Costanzo Jr. revealed the exact date in 2019 when prosecutors in Miami planned to bring charges against businessman Alex Saab for allegedly siphoning \$350 million from state contracts.

The leak, not previously made public, marks yet another embarrassing case of high-profile agent misconduct at the U.S.' premier anti-narcotics agency and could complicate the Justice Department's already-fraught prosecution of Saab.

Saab has become a cause célèbre among allies of President Nicolas Maduro. The socialist leader claims the Colombian-born businessman is a Venezuelan diplomat targeted for his



This image provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York on Oct. 26, 2023 shows John Costanzo Jr.. and this image provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York on Oct. 26, 2023 shows Manny Recio, a former U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration supervisor.

Associated Press

efforts to bypass American sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. Saab was arrested during a jet fuel stop in 2020 while en route to Iran, where he was sent by Maduro to negoti-

ate oil deals. But prior to his arrest, Saab was himself signed up as a DEA informant, meeting with agents outside Venezuela, forfeiting millions in illegal profits and agreeing to help

deepen their investigation of Maduro's inner circle before abandoning his cooperation agreement, according to prosecutors.

"When we indict someone, there's a reason that it's secret," Michael Nadler, a former federal prosecutor in Miami who charged Saab, told the Manhattan federal jury. "You should not be giving information to assist anybody outside the prosecution team to get clients." Nadler's testimony came several days into the bribery trial of Costanzo, who is charged with pocketing \$73,000 in cash in return for leaking confidential law enforcement information to his former boss in the agency and now co-defendant Manny Recio.

Recio, days after retiring as a DEA supervisor, went to work as an investigator for Miami defense lawyers Luis Guerra and David Macey. While prosecutors have described the defense lawyers as "crooked attorneys" who "paid handsomely for DEA secrets," they have not explained to jurors why they have not been charged alongside Costanzo and Recio.

Macey and Guerra didn't respond to requests for comment nor did The Flori-

da Bar, which polices attorney conduct, say whether it had taken any disciplinary action against the two men.

Costanzo and Recio vehemently deny wrongdoing and have said the charges are rooted in "leaps, guesswork and speculation." They have attacked this week the credibility of key witness Jorge Hernández, a longtime drug snitch who wore a wire for the FBI in this case even after the DEA blacklisted him for extorting other informants. Hernández has pleaded guilty to money laundering and told jurors he hopes his testimony will earn him a sentence of time served.

"The government is seeing ghosts because there was never a quid pro quo," defense attorney Torrey Young said in her opening statement. "John Costanzo wouldn't be bought, couldn't be bought and wasn't ever bought."

It's not clear what Recio did with the information leaked to him about Saab. However, he had been in close communication with Hernández, who was a trusted confidant of Saab and had been enlisted by Recio to help the defense attorneys recruit clients. □

The U.S. infant mortality rate rose last year. The CDC says it's the largest increase in two decades

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. infant mortality rate rose 3% last year the largest increase in two decades, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. White and Native American infants, infant boys and babies born at 37 weeks or earlier had significant death rate increases. The CDC's report, published Wednesday, also noted larger increases for two of the leading causes of infant deaths maternal complications and bacte-

rial meningitis. "It's definitely concerning, given that it's going in the opposite direction from what it has

been," said Marie Thoma, a University of Maryland researcher who studies maternal and infant mor-



The toes of a baby peek out of a blanket at a hospital in McAllen, Texas.

Associated Press

tality. Dr. Eric Eichenwald, a Philadelphia-based neonatologist, called the new data "disturbing," but said experts at this point can only speculate as to why a statistic that generally has been falling for decades rose sharply in 2022.

RSV and flu infections rebounded last fall after two years of pandemic precautions, filling pediatric emergency rooms across the country. "That could potentially account for some of it," said Eichenwald, who chairs an American Academy of Pediatrics commit-

tee that writes guidelines for medical care of newborns. Infant mortality is the measure of how many babies die before they reach their first birthday. Because the number of babies born in the U.S. varies from year to year, researchers instead calculate rates to better compare infant mortality over time. The U.S. infant mortality rate has been worse than other high-income countries, which experts have attributed to poverty, inadequate prenatal care and other possibilities. □

Israel criticizes South American countries after they cut diplomatic ties and recall ambassadors

By DANIEL POLITI

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

(AP) — Israel criticized Bolivia, Chile and Colombia on Wednesday after the South American countries undertook a series of diplomatic moves to protest Israel's military operations against Hamas in Gaza.

Other Latin American countries, including Argentina and Brazil, have also increased their criticism of the impact that Israel's military operations are having on civilians.

Israel on Wednesday called on Colombia and Chile to "explicitly condemn the Hamas terrorist organization, which slaughtered and abducted babies, children, women and the elderly," according to a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The call came hours after Chile and Colombia both recalled their ambassadors to Israel on Tuesday evening amid criticism of the killing of civilians in Gaza.

"Israel expects Colombia and Chile to support the right of a democratic country to protect its citizens, and to call for the immediate release of all the



A one-year-old Palestinian girl, Melicia Joudalost, was wounded in the Israeli bombardment at Aqsa Hospital in Deir al Balah City, Gaza Strip, Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023.

Associated Press

abductees, and not align themselves with Venezuela and Iran in support of Hamas terrorism," Israel's Foreign Ministry said.

Although the statement from Chile's Foreign Ministry regarding the recall of its ambassador did not mention Hamas, President Gabriel Boric did mention Hamas in a separate statement on X, formerly Twitter, in which he said "innocent

civilians" were the "main victims of Israel's offensive." Chile "doesn't doubt in condemning the attacks and kidnappings perpetrated by Hamas," Boric wrote. "Humanity cannot sustain itself through ties that dehumanize."

Colombia's President Gustavo Petro has been more direct as he has shared lots of messages on social media condemning Israel's

actions. "It's called genocide; they're doing it to remove the Palestinian people from Gaza and take it over," Petro wrote on X. "The head of the state committing this genocide is a criminal against humanity." Earlier, Israel had condemned Bolivia's decision Tuesday to sever diplomatic ties with Israel, characterizing it as a "surrender to terrorism and to the

Ayatollah's regime in Iran." Although Sunni, Hamas has grown increasingly close to the Shiite powerhouse, Iran. Cutting diplomatic ties with Israel means "the Bolivian government is aligning itself with the Hamas terrorist organization," Israel's Foreign Ministry said. Bolivia had previously severed diplomatic ties with Israel in 2009 only to resume them in 2020.

The diplomatic moves by the three South American countries, all of which are led by leftist leaders, come as others in the region have ramped up their criticism of Israel's military activity.

Argentina on Wednesday criticized Israel's attack in the Jabaliya refugee camp and said the "humanitarian situation in Gaza is ever more alarming."

"Argentina has unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas on Oct. 7 and recognizes Israel's right to its legitimate defense. However, nothing justifies the violation of international humanitarian law and the obligation to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts," Argentina's Foreign Ministry said. □

China keeps up military pressure on Taiwan, sending 43 planes and 7 ships near self-governing island

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Tai-

wan said Wednesday that China sent 43 military aircraft and seven ships near the self-ruled island, the latest sign that Beijing plans no let-up in its campaign of harassment, threats and intimidation.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said the figure was current for the 24 hours up to 6:00 a.m. Wednesday and that 37 of the aircraft had crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait, which China no longer recognizes as an informal divider between the sides. It said Taiwan had monitored the sit-

uation, scrambled jet fighters, dispatched ships and activated land-based missile systems, all standard responses to Chinese military activities, which include crossing into Taiwan's air defense identification zone but not into its actual airspace. Such Chinese maneuvers have become frequent and aggressive since then- U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022. China suspended military communication with the U.S. to show its displeasure over her trip to Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory to be brought under its control by force if

necessary. China's military maneuvers are seen as intended to break down Taiwanese morale, exhausting its pilots and other personnel and wearing down its equipment. Despite that, the present status of de-facto independence remains widely popular among the island's voters and the defense budget has been increased to purchase new equipment from the U.S., its chief ally, and to produce some items locally, including submarines.

At an international defense forum in Beijing on Monday, China's second-ranking military official Gen. Zhang Youxia reiterated threats by

the Chinese government to retaliate against moves toward establishing Taiwan's formal independence, saying that "no matter who

tries to split Taiwan from China in any form, China and the Chinese military will never allow that to happen." □



A Taiwan national flag flutters near the Taipei 101 building at the National Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, on May 7, 2023.

Associated Press

Dozens of Afghans who were illegally in Pakistan are detained and deported

By **MUNIR AHMED and RIAZ KHAN**

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistani security forces on Wednesday detained and deported dozens of Afghans who were living in the country illegally, after a government-set deadline for them to leave expired, authorities said.

The sweep is part of a new anti-migrant crackdown that targets all undocumented or unregistered foreigners, according to Islamabad, though it mostly affects some 2 million Afghans in Pakistan without documentation.

The crackdown has drawn widespread criticism from U.N. agencies, rights groups and the Taliban-led administration in Afghanistan. Pakistan's interim interior minister confirmed that the deportations have begun.

"Today, we said goodbye to 64 Afghan nationals as they began their journey back home," Sarfraz Bugti wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. "This action is a testament to Pakistan's determination to repatriate any individuals residing in the country without proper documentation." The authorities said Wednesday's sweeps took place in the port city of Karachi, the garrison city of Rawalpindi,



Afghans wait for clearance to depart for their homeland at a deportation camp set up by authorities to facilitate illegal immigrants, in Chaman, a town on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023.

Associated Press

and in various areas in the southwestern Baluchistan and northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, which border Afghanistan. The crackdown has worried thousands of Afghans in Pakistan waiting for relocation to the United States under a special refugee program since fleeing the Taliban takeover. Under U.S. rules, applicants first had to relocate to a third country in this case Pakistan for their cases to be

processed. Most of those awaiting relocation had worked for the U.S. government, non-government organizations and media organizations in the years before the Taliban returned to power and they fled fearing persecution at home. The Taliban-led administration later announced an amnesty, encouraging Afghans to come back.

On Tuesday, a U.S. official said Washington's priority was to facilitate the safe

and efficient resettlement and relocation of more than 25,000 eligible Afghans in Pakistan to the U.S. On Wednesday, three Pakistani officials confirmed that Islamabad received the list of such Afghans, but they said the list "was flawed and contained incomplete information." The officials said the list was subsequently withdrawn by the U.S. officials to review and revise it before sending it again after Pakistan

sought more clarity.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the record.

There was no immediate response from the U.S. Embassy about it.

On Tuesday, thousands of Afghans had crammed into trucks and buses and headed to the two key border crossings to return home to avoid arrest and forced deportation.

According to the U.N. agencies, there are more than 2 million undocumented Afghans in Pakistan, at least 600,000 of whom fled after the Taliban takeover in 2021. Human Right Watch on Tuesday accused Pakistan of resorting to "threats, abuse, and detention to coerce Afghan asylum seekers without legal status" to return to Afghanistan. The New York-based watchdog appealed for authorities to drop the deadline and work with the U.N. refugee agency to register those without papers. In Afghanistan, Zabihullah Mujahid, the main spokesman for the Taliban government expressed concerns over forced expulsion of Afghans, saying that the past 45 years of wars and conflict in Afghanistan had forced millions to migrate. □

2 men arrested in an investigation into a famous tree that was felled near Hadrian's Wall in England



A general view of the stars above Sycamore Gap prior to the Perseid Meteor Shower above Hadrian's Wall near Bardon Mill, England, Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Two more men have been arrested in the investigation into who cut down the world-famous Sycamore Gap tree, police in England said Wednesday.

The men, both in their 30s, were released on bail Tuesday without being charged in the felling of the iconic sycamore that stood for about 150 years next to the Roman landmark of Hadrian's Wall, according to Northumbria Police.

On the night between Sept. 27 and 28, the tree was cut

down, causing some damage to the wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built nearly 2,000 years ago, when Britain was part of the Roman Empire, to guard its northwestern frontier.

The 50-foot-tall (15-meter-long) tree planted in the 1800s stood out in a dip between two hills along the wall and became famous after it appeared in Kevin Costner's 1991 film "Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves." It became a popular subject for photographers. Police arrested a 16-year-old boy

and a man in his 60s soon after the fallen tree was discovered.

Each was released after questioning.

People in the Northumberland area and nature lovers across Britain have been outraged by what police described as "senseless destruction" and an act of vandalism.

"The loss of Sycamore Gap has been felt deeply across the community as well as further afield," Detective Chief Inspector Rebecca Fenney-Menzies said. □

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building “Cocolishi”, is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called “Willem III Toren”. Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of un-



wanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era). Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government cen-

ter points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm. □

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Emergency services

Even though most people don't even want to think about having to contact emergency services—especially not while on their vacation, it is still important to know what number to dial in case of the unlikely event of an accident or severe incident.

Police: 100
Police Tipline: 11141
Ambulance: 911
Fire Dept: 115
Oranjestad: HOH hospital: +297-527-4000
San Nicolas: ImSan: +297-527-8833

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying

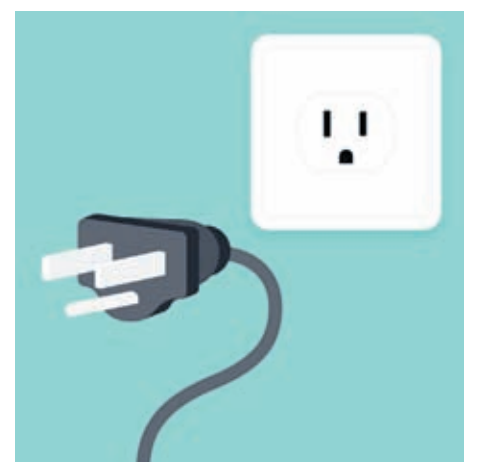
on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Taxis

Prices for taxi fair are set by the Department of Public Traffic and are based on destination rather than mileage. Most taxis can take up to five passengers, but this may vary depending on the vehicle. Taxis are pretty much always available and you can ever hire one for \$45 an hour.

Safety

Aruba is one of the safest islands in the Caribbean, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe. □





Papillon: The butterfly effect of magnificent food



PALM BEACH — Do you remember the film “Papillon” starring Steve McQueen? Papillon restaurant is the island’s example where ‘life imitates art.’ The décor, especially the restrooms, was inspired by the movie. For more than a decade this restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.

“We find it really important that our guests have fun; can relax while listening to live music while their taste buds are being tickled by France, The Netherlands and the Caribbean. We offer a unique fusion of dishes and a night not to forget,” says owner Tina. As our special guest you can choose to dine inside our heartwarming airconditioned restaurant or we also offer outside dining on a cozy, elegant terrace with great ambiance of the surroundings. Perfect setting for an enjoyable time people watching while sipping on a delicious cocktail.

Fresh oysters, caviar and wild boar

You are on vacation, life is to enjoy! If you want something special, a different flow than the usual, then Papillon is the place to go. Foodies are in heaven here with classic French dishes such as Foie Gras, Frog Legs, fresh Oysters coming in on a weekly basis from Holland, Escargots, Dover Sole à la Meunière flown in from Europe and filleted at the table, Duck Breast seared on the skin, roasted and braised Lamb in Balashi beer and slow braised Wild Boar Shank. Do not leave without trying the exclusive recommendation: Caviar! All of this combined with an extensive wine list from around the world makes Papillon a must-do on your Aruban vacation.

Let the music play!

Another reason to visit us is our Live Entertainment

Schedule all through the week.

Get all cozy and warmed up on Sundays and Mondays by Marisella and her enchanting acoustic tunes accompanied by percussion only.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Jairo will give you a real Saxophone treat while on Wednesday you can sit back, relax and enjoy your dinner while DJ Jason brings you the most smooth jazz and lounge music for a dreamy night.

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Aruba to me

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day

again.

For today we received a lovely message from Kathy Enders from the US.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is Paradise. Jim & I first went there in 1990. We have never missed a year so in Feb it will be 34 yrs. The first year we took a free bus ride to town & realized we were on a time share bus. Jim said what do you think & I said we don't have any plans so we sat thru the deal. After listening he purchased our Timeshare at the Seaport Village which was just being built. In 1991 we were in our room for the first time. No hot water, no TV yet, but we had the weather which is why we chose Aruba.

My husband had previously asked if I would like to try somewhere else for a change but my answer was definitely no.

When we got home the first year & told family what we did they

thought we were nuts. In the USA no one heard of Aruba. One of my friends asked if you could drive there? Guess what! Now family & friends have timeshare.

This Feb will be a wedding for the second granddaughter to have chosen Aruba as their special place. We have sooo many good Arubaian friends that we keep in touch with all year. Since we are now in our late 80's I don't know how many trips we will be able to go.

Aruba has the most friendly people ever. We were sitting outside of our timeshare, now called the Renaissance, when a lady taxi driver got out & asked if she could take our picture for us. Who does this? Not in the states for sure."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!



Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour

ORANJESTAD - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are

two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and interna-

tional cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad"

starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center- it is free for all! □



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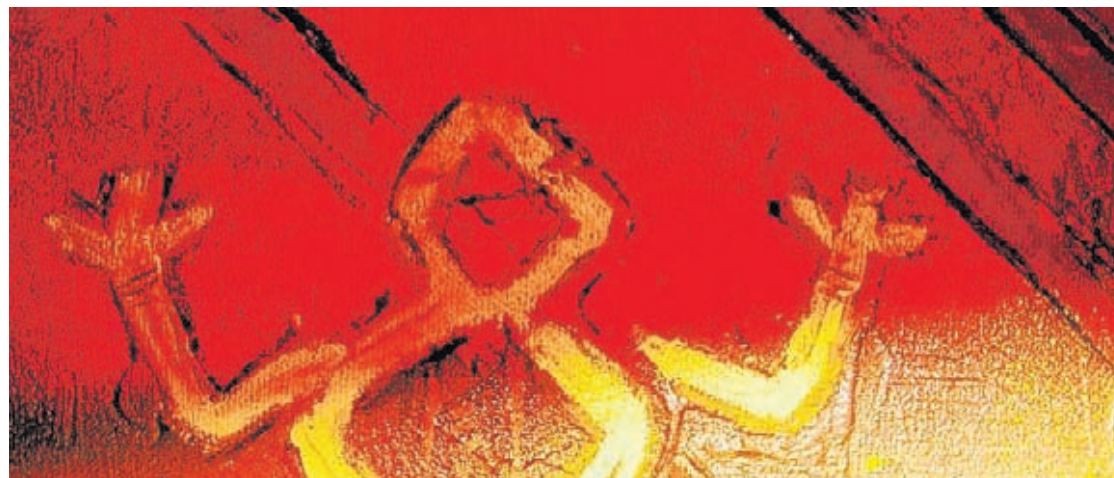
Episode LXXIV -74 - Frogs & fertility



NOORD — The symbolism of the frog appears in many traditions around the globe. This animal is generally associated with the water element and its cleansing attributes. Different cultures associate the frogs with fertility due to the large number of eggs it lays, which in parallel is related to abundance.

From the oldest cultures words such as luck, purity, rebirth, renewal, fertility and leadership are related to frogs. In Egypt, Heket, was a god with the head of a frog and this was related to fertility and births. The Celts viewed the frog as the lord possessor of the land and believed that it represented healing and leadership powers due to its connection to water and rain. In Japan the frog is seen as a symbol of good luck so it is common to see a frog amulet in any bag or purse to avoid losing money and especially for travelers whose crossing involves crossing

a sea or river. In relation to the fact that travelers carry a frog amulet with them, it is because the word frog in Japanese "kaeru" which also means to return in Japanese.



In current Western beliefs it is thought that frog amulets can help us in different transitions in relation to vital stages of our lives; when we need an element that provides us security and when we want to improve our intuition, strength and our connection with the spiritual world. In many Native American mythology frogs plays a variety of roles in different tribes. In some tribes, frogs are considered to be medicine animals that have healing powers and the ability to bring rain. In others, they are associated with disease and bad luck. To the Anishinabek tribes, who are resident in what

are now Canada and the United States, frogs represent transformation and growth. To Northwest Coast Native people, frogs are associated with springtime and renewal. In some Southern California cultures, frog is a major mythological character who killed their Creator god with evil witchcraft. And among indigenous tribes of Panama, such as the Guaymi and Kuna tribes, the rare golden frog is considered as a fertility animal and associated with wealth and a happy afterlife. The frog is a symbol of: Cleansing - Renewal, Rebirth - Fertility, Abundance - Transformation, Metamor-

phosis - Life, Ancient wisdom and Poison.

Even though that the cane toad, who is associated with rituals and hallucinations, is present on the island and has been here for a long time, the Dori is Aruba's only endemic frog species and an ancestral fertility totem.

The association with the rainy season explains it all. Happy Dori's sing all night in celebration of the coming harvest abundance. Therefore during these rainy days it is ideal to try if you could spot one, or at least hear the dori sing its hypnotic song, calling for a mate. Telling her how beautiful life could be if she only could come a little closer.

The frog as spirit animal or totem reminds us of the transient nature of our lives. As symbol of transition and transformation, this spirit animal supports us in times of change. Strongly associated with the water element, it connects us with the world of emotions and feminine energies, as well as the process of cleansing, whether it's physical, emotional, or more spiritual in essence. □

To get to know more regarding Aruba's and its origins, its animals culture etc. We highly recommend you to book your participation. Living our cultural encounter session is mind opening and entertaining curious hearts for decades. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com. Our facilities and activities take place close to your place.



Article by: Etnia Nativa
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A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to

Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck. These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence



of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while

it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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32 Astronaut
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DOWN

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Yesterday's answer

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11-2

A X Y D I B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-2

CRYPTOQUOTE

R L Q ' M Q Y M V B Q I F L S K P Y T U

E B G K O Y U S B G P Y T L B Q ' M

M V K L U R V B M K R M . — M K U U P

F R F B E E L Q

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NOVEMBER ALWAYS SEEMS TO ME THE NORWAY OF THE YEAR. — EMILY DICKINSON

Why travelers expecting sticker shock could see sweet relief instead



People pass through Salt Lake City International Airport, June 27, 2022, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

SAM KEMMIS of NerdWallet

Dining out is more expensive than ever. The cost of gas is rising again. And the price of travel including airfare and hotels has kept pace. Right?

Not exactly. Airfare costs declined by 13% between September 2022 and September 2023, according to September 2023 Consumer Price Index data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Far from being an inflationary force, travel prices have actually helped cool overall prices this year. Yet this seems to fly in the face of many travelers' expectations. "I keep hearing the narrative that it's so expensive to travel," says Hayley Berg, lead economist at Hopper, a travel booking platform. "In reality we're seeing lower prices, for domestic trips especially."

Travel prices have fluctuated so often since 2019 that it makes sense if recent price drops haven't registered for many travelers. And while airfare has decreased in recent months below 2019 levels, other expenses such as dining out and renting a car remain above their pre-pandemic baseline.

Put simply: It's been com-

plicated, yet prices are moderating.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS STILL PRICEY

Part of this complication comes from the divergence in price swings for domestic and international airfare. Overseas travelers have seen starkly higher relative prices than those flying within the U.S.

"On the international front, prices for most destinations are higher than pre-pandemic," Berg says.

Typical roundtrip fares from the U.S. to Europe hit nearly \$1,200 this summer, according to Hopper data, which was the highest price in six years. Tickets to Asia reached almost \$1,600. And while Berg says prices have moderated since then, they remain high by historical standards. On the flip side, domestic prices are down compared with 2022.

What's driving this difference in price trends? The supply of aircraft seats is one issue. Although airlines are now operating at 2019 capacity domestically, they have been slower to add international flights, according to Berg.

Indeed, American Airlines added only 11% more in-

ternational capacity in the first half of 2023 compared with the same period in 2022, according to its second-quarter financial results, yet revenue increased on those routes by 41%. Clearly, supply hasn't kept pace with demand, and prices have risen.

Another reason airlines have been able to keep international prices high: a relative lack of competition from low-cost airlines.

"If you think back to 2019, it was the heyday of flying to London for \$300 with a stopover in Iceland," Berg says. "Fast forward to today, many of those airlines are not operating or operating at lower capacity." All this points to the same conclusion for budget-minded travelers: Airfare is relatively cheap for U.S. travel and expensive for those flying abroad.

OTHER PRICES FLUCTUATING

Lodging prices have fluctuated less dramatically than airfare over the past two years, though current prices overall are elevated over 2019 and 2022 levels. Average daily rates for U.S. hotels rose by 2% year-over-year in August, according to STR, an industry analyst. Short-term rental prices over the same period were largely flat based on data from AirDNA, a short-term rental analytics company.

The cost of renting a car, which skyrocketed in the past few years, has normalized somewhat. Prices were down 9% in September 2023 compared with the same month last year. And Berg suggests that these trends, too, vary by region. "In Florida, which is one of the most popular markets, prices are incredibly low," she says.

"Where the supply is, prices are very low."

Still, car rental prices have much farther to fall before they reach pre-pandemic norms. It now costs 37% more to rent a car than it did in 2019, according to September's Consumer Price Index. □

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Cardiovascular deaths caused by extreme heat in U.S. could potentially triple by midcentury



A sign displays an unofficial temperature as jets taxi at Sky Harbor International Airport at dusk, July 12, 2023, in Phoenix. Arizona's Maricopa County, the hottest metropolitan area in the U.S. and home to Phoenix, set a new record Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023, for annual heat-associated deaths. County officials said the 425 deaths were confirmed as of Oct. 14. Another 199 deaths remain under investigation.

Associated Press

American Heart Association News

The number of cardiovascular deaths from extreme heat could more than double in the United States and possibly triple – by the middle of the century if more isn't done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, new research suggests.

Older adults and non-Hispanic Black adults may be especially at risk, according to the study published Monday in the American Heart Association journal Circulation.

"Climate change and its

many manifestations will play an increasingly important role on the health of communities around the world in the coming decades," Dr. Sameed Khatana, the study's lead author, said in a news release. Khatana is an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and a cardiologist at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. "Climate change is also a health equity issue as it will impact certain individuals and populations to a disproportionate degree and may exacerbate preexisting health disparities in the U.S."

Extreme heat a maximum heat index of 90 degrees Fahrenheit or higher was associated with 1,651 excess cardiovascular deaths per year from 2008 to 2019, according to the analysis, funded by the AHA and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. By midcentury, that could rise to 4,320 excess deaths a year if proposed policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are implemented. A projected 5,491 of such deaths may occur if only minimal action is taken.

For that reason, how much and how quickly emissions policies are adopted nationwide could determine how many lives will be lost due to extreme heat, Khatana said.

Researchers said the extreme heat also will exacerbate preexisting health disparities. The increase in

heat-related cardiovascular deaths is projected to be up to 3.5 times greater in people 65 and older compared to younger adults, the study found. For Black adults, such deaths could be up to 4.6 times greater than for white adults. □

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Huey Lewis' rom-com musical 'The Heart of Rock & Roll' finds a stage on Broadway in spring

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Huey Lewis, who with his band The News stormed radio in the 1980s with such rock-pop hits as "The Power of Love" and "I Want a New Drug," is about to take his music to a Broadway stage. Lewis and executive producer Hunter Arnold tell The Associated Press that the jukebox musical "The Heart of Rock & Roll" constructed from Lewis' songs will play the James Earl Jones Theatre starting March 2024, capping more than 10 years of gestation. "It's been a long road, but it's very gratifying," Lewis said. "I'm pinching myself because it's really going to happen now."

The show, which has an original story unconnected to Lewis, broke the record for highest gross per performance at San Diego's Old Globe theater in 2018.

"It's smart, first of all, and funny. And it has a lot of heart and it's about love,



Musician Huey Lewis poses for a portrait in New York on Oct. 2, 2019.

Associated Press

basically," Lewis said. "People ask me, 'What's it about, 'The Heart of Rock & Roll'? And it's actually about the power of love."

Lewis has tweaked some

song lyrics to make them able to be sung by different people and in contexts he never initially anticipated. "The fun part of that is being able to hear these

songs that we wrote tell a new story in a completely different way," he said.

Music supervisor and orchestrator Brian Usifer has reworked the tunes for a word-driven show, and the production will feature a book by Jonathan A. Abrams. Alongside Hunter as producers are Tyler Mitchell, who initially proposed a show based on the band's music, and Kayla Greenspan. Casting will be announced later.

The story centers on a blue-collar guy who used to be in a rock band in his 20s. He finds himself in his 30s prepared to take the leap to middle-class respectability when his bandmates return to take another stab at music.

There's also a love story when he falls for the boss' daughter.

"It's an everyman story," said Arnold. "It's really a story about what do we actually want in life, and how do we decide that for ourselves."

Huey Lewis & The News had 12 top 10 Billboard hits on the Hot 100 and three that made No. 1. They won a Grammy Award, for best music video for "The Heart of Rock 'n' Roll," and "The Power of Love" was nominated for an Academy Award.

Most of the band's hits came from "Sports" — their sophomore album — released in 1983, which hit No. 1 on the Billboard 200 and stayed on the chart for 160 weeks. It spun off such singles as "Heart and Soul," "I Want a New Drug," "If This Is It," "Finally Found a Home," "Walking on a Thin Line" and "The Heart of Rock & Roll."

Lewis was an unlikely pop star, with earnest and sweet songs that verged on corny, delivered by a singer substantially older than his counterparts on the charts. "It's the weirdest thing because the man who defied the '80s in many ways now also defines the '80s," said Arnold. □

Do you believe? Cher set to star in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade this year

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Cher is obviously a superstar but even a superstar can be the opening act when it comes to Santa.

Organizers of this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade have nabbed the Oscar-, Emmy- and Grammy Award-winner for their 97th annual event. Cher will make her appearance just before the parade's end, signaled by the arrival of Santa's sleigh, parade organizers said.

This year's parade will feature 16 giant character balloons, 26 floats, 32 novelty and heritage inflatables, 12 marching bands, 700 clowns and eight performance groups.

It's a busy time for Cher,

who is preparing to release a 25th-anniversary edition of her Grammy-winning album "Believe" and just dropped her first new album in five years, "Christmas."

For the first time in its long

history, the holiday tradition will begin at 8:30 a.m. ET, half an hour earlier than previous years, kicked off by multi-instrumentalist and Grammy-winner Jon Batiste.

There will be appearances

by Bell Biv DeVoe, Brandy, Chicago, En Vogue, ENHYPEN, David Foster and Katharine McPhee, Drew Holcomb and The Neighbors, Jessie James Decker, Ashley Park with some Muppets from "Sesame Street," Pentatonix, Paul Russell, Amanda Shaw and Alex Smith, and Manuel Turizo.

U.S. Olympic gymnastics silver medalist Jordan Chiles, U.S. track and field Paralympian Ezra Frech and U.S. Paralympic swimming gold medalist Jessica Long and Miss America 2023 Grace Stanke will also join the festivities.

Seven new balloon giants will join the lineup: "Beagle Scout Snoopy," "Blue Cat & Chugs," "Kung Fu Panda's Po," "Leo," "Monkey D. Luffy," "Pillsbury Dough-

boy" and "Uncle Dan." Broadway will be represented by performances from "& Juliet," "Back to the Future: The Musical," "How To Dance In Ohio," "Shucked" and "Spamalot," with an appearance by Josh Gad and Andrew Rannells of "Gutenberg! The Musical!" Returning giant balloons include "Bluey," "Diary of a Wimpy Kid," "Paw Patrol," "Ryan's World," "Pikachu," "Ronald McDonald," "Stuart the Minion" and "SpongeBob SquarePants." The Macy's parade has been a traditional holiday season kickoff and spectators often line up a half-dozen deep along the route to cheer the marchers, floats, entertainers and marching bands. □



Cher arrives at the premiere of "Chevalier" in Los Angeles on April 16, 2023.

Associated Press

Longtime dirt rivals Larson and Bell at last go head-to-head for NASCAR championship

By JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

AVONDALE, Ariz. (AP) —

The rivalry hardly reaches the heights of Petty versus Pearson or Earnhardt against Gordon as one of NASCAR's great competitions.

But there is no doubt that dozens of dirt track battles between Kyle Larson and Christopher Bell have created an interesting dynamic ahead of Sunday's championship.

Larson beat Bell at Las Vegas Motor Speedway to claim the first of four spots in Sunday's title-deciding season finale, then Bell won the next week at Homestead-Miami Speedway to take the second slot.

Their rivalry is the most intense of the championship contenders. William Byron dates Ryan Blaney's youngest sister and referred to Blaney as his "brother-in-law" last week, and Bell and Larson will finally race each other for the biggest trophy to date.

"I don't know how fans view it, (but) I really enjoy getting to race a guy in the Cup Series that when



Christopher Bell, left, and Kyle Larson, right, are shown at Homestead-Miami Speedway, Oct. 22, 2023.

we were starting out racing with each other, neither of us were in the Cup Series," Larson said.

Larson has 23 wins over nine full Cup Series seasons and won the 2021 Cup title driving for Hendrick Motorsports.

Bell has six wins in four Cup seasons driving for Joe Gibbs Racing. He won the Truck Series championship in 2017.

For most of their careers, the annual Chili Bowl Nationals in Bell's home state of Oklahoma was the only

race that mattered. Bell won it three consecutive times in small open-wheel midget cars from 2017 to 2019 as Larson came up short time and time again. Larson finally broke through with back-to-back wins in 2020 and 2021.

Associated Press

The two were once dirt midget teammates at Keith Kunz Motorsports, where Bell seemed to consistently beat Larson in equal equipment, and the relationship hasn't always been warm.

"He kicked my ass for a few years straight, like every race," Larson said. "I don't know if I ever beat him. He made me work really hard to get better as a driver, especially on the dirt track stuff."

The two had a NASCAR incident on the road course at Watkins Glen two years ago that created a brief but public feud: Larson said Bell ignored an apology text, Bell said Larson "cried to the media" about the snub before Bell had a chance to respond.

They went quite some time without speaking before eventually resolving the dispute and moving on with their careers. Larson at Phoenix Raceway on Sunday is racing for a second Cup title in three years, while Bell is back in the championship four for the second consecutive year but seeking his first championship. □

Medvedev booed by Paris crowd in loss to Dimitrov that rules him out of year-end No. 1 contention

PARIS (AP) — Daniil Medvedev dropped out of contention for the year-end No. 1 ranking by losing to Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (2) in the second round of the Paris Masters on Wednesday, and then was booed off the court after remonstrating with the crowd during the match.

The crowd got under Medvedev's skin in the 11th game of the second set, jeering him as he was about to serve after he had thrown his racket. The third-ranked Russian went back to his chair and complained to the referee before talking directly to the spectators in French.

"If there's one who whistles, I don't play," Medvedev

told the crowd. "You don't whistle, I play. So, you shut your mouths."

From that moment, the crowd overwhelmingly threw its support behind



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry during the second round of the Paris Masters tennis tournament, at the Accor Arena, Wednesday Nov. 1, 2023 in Paris.

Associated Press

Dimitrov, and Medvedev appeared to make a rude hand gesture toward some spectators as he walked off the court after the loss.

"I play in Bercy much better when there is no crowd at all in attendance," Medvedev joked at his news conference, referring to winning the Paris Masters title in 2020 during the pandemic in an empty arena. "That's the only time I won the tournament."

Dimitrov lost to Medvedev in the second round of the Erste Bank Open in Austria last week, but the Bulgarian hit 45 winners on Wednesday compared to 22 for the Russian, who double-faulted eight times.

Dimitrov whipped a fore-

hand passing shot to break for a 4-2 lead in the final set but he failed to serve out the match at 5-3 as Medvedev saved four match points, including one 47-shot rally.

Medvedev saved two more match points on his serve at 6-5 but Dimitrov jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the decisive tiebreaker and converted his seventh match point with a forehand volley.

That leaves No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz as the only player who can overtake Novak Djokovic as No. 1 at the end of the season, but the Spaniard's chances also took a hit when he lost to qualifier Roman Safiullin on Tuesday. □

Raiders fire coach Josh McDaniels and GM Dave Ziegler

By **MARK ANDERSON**

AP Sports Writer

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP) —

When the Las Vegas Raiders hired Josh McDaniels in January 2022, he said he had learned from his first stint as an NFL head coach. But McDaniels' record actually was worse the second time around than it was with the Denver Broncos in 2009 and 2010, and late Tuesday night, the Raiders announced that owner Mark Davis fired McDaniels and general manager Dave Ziegler.

McDaniels became the first non-interim coach in the Super Bowl era to be fired by two franchises before the end of his second season.

"After much thought about



Las Vegas Raiders head coach Josh McDaniels addresses the media after the NFL football game against the Detroit Lions, Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, in Detroit. Associated Press

what the Raiders need to move forward, I have decided to part ways with

Josh and Dave," Davis said in a statement. "I want to thank them both for their

hard work and wish them and their families nothing but the best." The Raiders

announced linebackers coach Antonio Pierce will take over as the interim coach. His first game will be Sunday at home against the Giants. He played for New York from 2005-09.

Las Vegas also announced assistant general manager Champ Kelly will be the interim GM.

The team will conduct searches for replacements for McDaniels and Ziegler after the season.

McDaniels was the Raiders' play caller, so offensive coordinator Mick Lombardi might take over those duties.

Davis had hoped to bring the New England's success westward when he hired McDaniels, the longtime Patriots offensive coordinator. Ziegler worked in New England's front office, and between the former teammates at John Carroll University, they transformed the Raiders into Patriots West by signing several players with ties to that organization.

But despite taking over a team that made the playoffs in 2021 before losing to the Cincinnati Bengals in the wild-card round, the success Davis so badly wanted never made its way to Las Vegas.

The Raiders under McDaniels went 6-11 in 2022 and are 3-5 so far this season for a .360 winning percentage. His record at Denver was 11-17 (.393 percentage). Even so, Davis has stood by McDaniels, and the timing of this dismissal is surprising. McDaniels met with the media early Tuesday afternoon and was scheduled for another news conference Wednesday morning to discuss facing the Giants.

But McDaniels had some things working against him. The Raiders have failed to score at least 20 points in eight of their past nine games dating to last season, and offense is his specialty. The one game Las Vegas reached that figure came because of a fourth-quarter safety in a 21-17 victory over the Patriots on Oct. 15. □



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